

# Understanding Micro-credentials in Philippine Higher Education

## What are Micro-credentials?

Micro-credentials are smaller units of learning designed to provide lifelong learners with knowledge, skills, values, and competencies in a specific area of study or practice. They can be:

- A course or set of courses offered within a field of study
- Delivered mostly online and provided with digital credentials
- A portion of macro-credentials (bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees)
- Executive or professional development courses that complement traditional education

Micro-credentials offer a flexible, industry-based approach to learning that can be designed in collaboration with industry partners to provide learners with relevant knowledge and skills for current and emerging job roles.

## Key Characteristics of Micro-credentials

### 1. Size and Scope

- Smaller units of learning compared to traditional degrees
- Range from 1 credit unit (17 hours) to 30 credit units (510 hours)
- Aligned with PQF levels 5 to 8

### 2. Types of Micro-credentials

- **For-Credit (Stackable):** Can be accumulated and applied toward certificates, minors, or degrees (1-30 credit units)
- **Non-Credit:** Intended for lifelong learning and skill development but not applicable toward a higher education degree

### 3. Delivery Methods

- Online delivery
- Mobile learning
- Flipped learning
- Open and Distance e-Learning (ODEL) approaches
- Residential or modular formats

## Principles of Micro-credentials

1. **Learner-Centered:** Designed to meet learner needs and interests

2. **Outcomes-based:** Focused on competency-based learning with specific learning outcomes
3. **Skills-Based:** Concentrated on developing specific skills through various learning experiences
4. **Personalized Learning:** Allows learners to select from multiple options based on their needs
5. **Industry-driven:** Aligned with workplace and industry demands
6. **Accessible and Inclusive:** Open to all types of learners regardless of background
7. **Flexible Learning:** Designed for various learning options and self-paced progress
8. **Portability and Mobility:** Owned by the learner and easily shared through secure digital wallets
9. **Assessment:** Includes appropriate learning outcomes that can be assessed based on standards

## Framework for Micro-credentials

### Lifelong Learning

Micro-credentials support lifelong learning by providing accessible opportunities for learners to reskill and upskill with verifiable credit pathways.

### Credit Pathways

- CHED supports micro-credentials from 1 credit unit (17 hours) to 30 credit units (510 hours)
- Can be aligned with PQF levels 5 to 8

### Quality Assurance

Micro-credentials must be quality-assured by CHED OPSD Non-Conventional Higher Education Division to gain credit in higher education curricula.

### Recognition

- Must come from CHED-recognized higher education institutions and programs
- Industry providers must partner with CHED-recognized HEIs for stackable micro-credentials

### Outcomes-Based Learning

Micro-credentials must follow existing CHED curricular guidelines and lead to qualifications based on credible outcomes-based courses.

### PQF Alignment

Micro-credentials should align with PQF levels 5-8 and offer specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that can be assessed.

## Elements of Micro-credentials

1. **Identification of Learner:** Target audience for the micro-credential
2. **Title:** Approved name of the micro-credential

3. **Description:** Basic information about the course content, learning methods, and assessment tools
4. **Learning Hours/Credit Units:** Number of hours required and equivalent credit units
5. **Maximum Length of Student Engagement:** Time required to complete the micro-credential
6. **Learning Outcomes:** Expected results that follow learning taxonomy and align with PQF levels
7. **Content:** Topics and skills to be learned
8. **Learning Experiences and Delivery Mode:** Activities and platforms used for delivery

## **Development and Delivery**

### **Development**

Higher Education Institutions can design micro-credentials that are:

- For-credit (1-30 credit units) that can be stacked into certificates or degrees
- Curriculum-embedded to certify knowledge within existing courses
- Non-credit for general knowledge and skill development

### **Delivery**

- Can be offered fully online, flexible, blended, or in conventional modalities
- CHED-recognized Open, Distance and E-learning (ODEL) HEIs can offer micro-credentials
- Non-ODEL providers need CHED approval to offer ODEL programs

## **Recognition and Quality Assurance**

### **Recognition Process**

- CHED's Technical Panel on Lifelong Learning (TP-LLL) reviews micro-credentials
- CHED posts a listing of recognized micro-credentials and approved providers annually
- HEIs may partner with industries and non-HEI providers to jointly offer micro-credentials

### **Quality Assurance**

- All HEIs offering micro-credentials must have external and internal quality assurance processes
- HEIs should provide information about their level of accreditation
- Quality assurance should involve all stakeholders through feedback and evaluation

## **Assessment and Credit Transfer**

### **Assessment**

- Uses transparent standards and learning outcomes
- Must be performance-based with verifiable quality

- Assessment tools must align with learning outcomes

## **Credit Transfer**

- HEIs may recognize micro-credentials from industry providers and non-HEI entities
- Credit transfer considers:
  - Alignment of learning outcomes
  - Number of hours (actual learning time)
  - Appropriate credit units
  - Assessment appropriateness
  - Issuance of numerical grades

## **Digital Credentials and Certificates**

### **Digital Badges**

- Allow learners to present achievements in digital format
- Can be shared on platforms like LinkedIn, social media, and e-portfolios
- Provide verifiable proof of competencies and skills

### **Certificates**

- HEIs, industry providers, or CHED-approved non-HEI providers should issue certificates upon completion
- Only CHED-listed providers can issue recognized micro-credentials

## **Implementation**

### **Designing Micro-credentials**

- Should provide flexible, focused approaches to acquiring specific skills
- Should involve collaboration with industry experts and align with industry needs

### **Delivering Micro-credentials**

- Primarily provided online through specific applications and technology
- Only HEIs with CHED-recognized programs can confer certificates for stackable micro-credentials

### **Validation and Crediting**

- HEIs may recognize micro-credentials from approved providers
- Micro-credentials can be offered for three years with yearly proof of relevance
- For bachelor's degrees, up to 30 credit units can be credited from micro-credentials

- For master's degrees, 30% of total units (about 9 units) can be credited
  - For doctoral programs, 30% of total units (about 7 units) can be credited
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*This document is based on official guidelines from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the Philippines.*